Elderly population in a deep chasm

594. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a study on mental health and ageing in India by two senior lecturers from Lonon Institute of Psychiaty, as reported in the 'Asian Age' of May 3, 1999, to the effect that India's elderly population is falling into a deep chasm — "loosening Kinship ties make family careless reliable";

(b) if so, whether Government have drawn out any comprehensive action plan to provide the much needed succour to the aged, deprived and destitute persons; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, indicating the latest population of such senior citizens-males and females?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) Yes Madam.

(c) The Government has announced a National Policy on Older Persons in January, 1999. This policy provides a broad framework for inter-sectoral collaboration and cooperation both within the government as well as between governmental and non-governmental agencies. In particular the policy has identified a number of areas of intervention, financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter, education, welfare, protection of life and property etc. for the well being of older persons in the country. The Government has constituted a National Council for Older Persons in May, 1999 to operationalise this Policy, The project on Old Age and Income Security (OASIS) has also been commissioned by the Ministry. The Policy has a specific section about healthcare and nutrition of older persons. In para 46 of the Policy makes a special mention of the Government's intention to tackle mental health problems by stating that — "Mental health services will be expanded and strengthened. Families will be provided counselling facilities and information on the care and treatment of older persons having mental health problem". The total population of senior citizens (aged 60+) in India, excluding

Jammu and Kashmir, as per 1991 census was 56,681,640. However, the information with regard to population of senior citizens suffering from mental health problems, is not available.

Abolition of Scavenging

†595. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the practice of scavenging is still prevalent in many parts of the country;

(b) if so, what are details thereof; and

(c) by when Government would abolish this abominable practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) A statement is enclosed. (*see* below)

(c) The Government proposes to abolish this practice by the end of 9th Five Year Plan.

Statement

States/UTs where scavenging is prevalent

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Assam
3. Bihar
4. Gujarat
5. Haryana
6. Himachal Pradesh
7. Jammu & Kashmir
8. Karnataka
9. Kerala
10. Madhya Pradesh
11. Maharashtra

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.